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# Resolution seeks adequate EPA funding

A resolution addressing the local asbestos cleanup and desire for an asbestos-related disease research center in Libby has been released for community members' signatures by the Center for Asbestos Related Disease and other community partners.

The resolution articulates the desire of the community to speak with "one voice" about cutbacks in Environmental Protection Agency funding that would impact the cleanup efforts already under way for contaminated residences, businesses and lands in Libby.

Local residents fear the funding shortfall will further undermine efforts to counteract the stigma of the community's Superfund designation.

Libby has also been suggested as a site for an asbestos-related disease research center. The CARD board and staff are currently working with its Committee for Asbestos Related Research national advisory group to determine the feasibility of such a facility and research objectives for a research center. The resolution identifies the research center to be located in Libby.

The resolution idea, which originated with the Community Advisory Group, became a joint effort between the CAG, the CARD, and the Technical Assistance Group. The concept was presented to the Asbestos Related Disease Network, a network of healthcare providers in Libby that communicates and collaborates on ARD issues. A draft resolution was circulated among many community organizations and individuals for additional comments and suggestions.

The final version is available for signature at the front desk of

the CARD clinic, 308 Louisiana Ave., during business hours of 8-11 a.m. and 1-5 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The full text of the resolution is available online at [www.libbycard.org](http://www.libbycard.org).

Elected officials, area organizations, businesses and individuals from throughout Lincoln County are encouraged to stop by the CARD clinic and sign the resolution.

In addition to the community resolution, CAG members Gayla Benefield and Gordon Sullivan are mounting a letter-writing campaign for people to express their own personal concern about the reduced EPA funding. Letters can be dropped off at Timberline Auto Center in

Libby.

"This community effort for both the resolution and the letter-writing endeavor underscores local support for the need for funding as promised for the timely cleanup," said CARD board president Mike Giesey.

Plans are under way to present both the resolution and a "bushel basket" full of letters to EPA administrator Mike Leavitt to show that the community is committed to holding the EPA accountable for funding for asbestos cleanup. There is a possibility that Leavitt will visit Libby this spring.

"Because ARD has affected the entire community - health issues, environmental degrada-

tion, economic loss, and long term exposure that may affect future generations because of the latency of disease symptoms, it is important that the EPA knows we need the cleanup to progress on its original time table to prevent even further exposure," said Dr. Brad Black, Lincoln County health officer and director of the CARD clinic. "Even low-level exposure may pose unknown health consequences. The resolution reflects that the 'community' of Lincoln County stands together in desiring conclusion of the cleanup effort as well as hope for future breakthroughs in treatments, care, and cures for ARD through the research center."